

Zachary Haffner

History 133A, UCSB

Harold Marcuse

14 November 2018

Source Exploration: A British Diplomat in Berlin Assesses Bismarck and his Post-Unification

International Ambitions

My original document is a letter from Odo Russell to Lord Granville concerning Otto Bismarck's international ambitions in 1873. The text used by GHDI was found in a USPGO publication of Paul Knaplund's *Letters from the Berlin Embassy: Selections from the Private Correspondence of British Representatives at Berlin and Foreign Secretary Lord Granville, 1871-1874, 1880-1885*, published in 1944 (note that the publication for the year 1942 by the American Historical Association came out in 1944). I found and ordered a copy of this publication from New York University. The book is a roughly 400 page collection of Odo Russell's correspondence with Lord Granville over the aforementioned time periods. As Otto Bismarck was an unquestionably influential statesman in the 19th century, the documents from Odo Russell that Knaplund has collected are valuable in the insight that they give to Bismarck's thinking.

Odo Russell was a British diplomat in the 19th century and served as the first British Ambassador to the German Empire from 1871-1884. He was multilingual and skilled in foreign relations, working on behalf of the Great Britain in Florence, Paris, Constantinople, the Vatican, and Washington. Upon making an affable acquaintance with Otto von Bismarck, he was appointed as ambassador in Berlin in 1871. He was loyal to and respected England and

Bismarck, sentiments reciprocated by the Iron Chancellor. This close relationship with Bismarck paired with Russell's astuteness allowed for a number of insightful observations to be made concerning the German Chancellor's earnest intentions. Lord Granville was Russell's superior back in England and served as the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for three terms, including two under Prime Minister William Gladstone in 1871-1874 and in 1880-1885. In addition to correspondences with Granville, Knaplund's collections also contains correspondence between Russell and Gladstone as well as Granville and Gladstone on the topic of German international intentions.

Paul Knaplund was a Norwegian born American historian whose main focus of study was the British Empire. He emigrated to the United States at age twenty and lived there for the rest of his life.¹ He was cited as the first person to gain access to the private correspondence of former British Prime Minister William Gladstone, which testifies to Knaplund's ability as a historian.² His work was meticulous and the collection in question was referenced many times in numerous historical publication concerning Bismarck, Bismarck's decedents, and European international relations that even extended beyond the scope of Knaplund's original work.

The publication of *Letters from the Berlin Embassy, 1871-1874, 1880-1885* includes numerous letters that are organized into chronological chapters. At the beginning of each chapter, Knaplund provides a few pages of historical context for the subsequent letters of that chapter. Additionally, there are a number of footnotes to provide clarification on the letters.

¹ "Paul Knaplund." Wikipedia. October 06, 2016. Accessed November 15, 2018. https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Knaplund.

² "Paul A. Knaplund, 79, Is Dead; Historian Taught at Wisconsin." The New York Times. April 11, 1964. Accessed November 15, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/04/11/archives/paul-a-knaplund-79-is-dead-historian-taught-at-wisconsin.html>.

Though a large number of the letters were sent between Russell and Granville, there are other correspondences with other lords and acquaintances of Lord Granville. These private correspondences are invaluable in their earnestness; they allow for a better picture to be painted of how the imperial superpower of Britain viewed the Bismarck and unification era Germany, and vice versa.

Though perhaps not the best metric to evaluate him by, a google ngram search of the primary diplomat in question, Odo Russell, revealed that the appearance of his name in publications peaked in 1904 and 1938, long before Knaplund's publication. One source that will be addressed later was published in 1938 and gives a short biographical account of Russell via Knaplund's work. Interestingly, though Knaplund appeared to be a well-known historian, his work, which largely contains mention of Odo Russell and would be cited many times, did not cause much increase in printed mentions of the diplomat.

Bibliography

"Germany." *Times* [London, England] 6 Mar. 1873: 5. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 31 Oct. 2018.

A very brief Times of London publication of a telegram correspondence describing Odo Russell's attendance at a dinner with the Emperor of Prussia, a luxury never before allotted to a diplomat. This instance further shows Russell's status in German court circles.

"The Crown Prince And Princess Of Germany." *Times* [London, England] 26 Apr. 1873: 5. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 31 Oct. 2018.

A very short telegram correspondence (similar to the above "Germany" publication) that shows the Royal family of Prussia acknowledging Russell's arrival at their dinner.

"An Imperial Fete." *Times* [London, England] 13 Sept. 1872: 4. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 31 Oct. 2018.

An article found in the Times of London mentions Odo Russell briefly in describing an imperial event put on by the Crown Prince of Prussia. Russell's attendance speaks volumes to his high status as diplomat at the German court.

"Russell's Diary During The War." *Times* [London, England] 11 Nov. 1873: 10. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 31 Oct. 2018.

An interesting article published in 1873 which parallels Knaplund's work in many ways. The article provides communications between the newspaper's Prussian correspondent and Odo Russell and gives insight into the goings on in the Berlin embassy around the time 1873. Though article provides some excerpts from Russell's own diary, giving

example of such literature of this type and topic that predates Knaplund's collection by some time.

Taffs, Winfred. *Ambassador to Lord Bismarck, Odo Russell*. (1938).

A lengthy biography of Odo Russell's work as ambassador to Prussia. Russell was born to a military father and aristocratic mother in Florence in 1829. With a strong command of many languages, he had already been established in embassies in Washington, Vienna, Constantinople and Paris by his early twenties. When sent to Versailles to discuss the Treaty of Paris in 1871, the friendly acquaintance he made with Bismarck sowed the seeds for a long running diplomatic relationship. The source is very lengthy and details Russell's affairs as ambassador in Berlin.

Knaplund, Paul A. *Letters from the Berlin Embassy Selections from the Private Correspondence of British Representatives at Berlin and Foreign Secretary Lord Granville 1871-1874, 1880-1885*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1944.

The original document published by the American Historical Association contains the full collection with explanatory by that Knaplund.

Engel-Janosi, Friedrich. Review of "Letters from the Berlin Embassy Selections from the Private Correspondence of British Representatives at Berlin and Foreign Secretary Lord Granville 1871-1874, 1880-1885." in *The Catholic Historical Review* 32, no. 1. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1946: 92-94.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25014652>.

This is a review of Knaplund's work on Russell's correspondence with Granville. Engel-Janosi characterizes Russell as an adept diplomat and cites numerous sections in

Knaplund's work to characterize relations between Germany and Britain during the 1870's and 1880's. This review holds these primary source documents as very useful in their ability to show the inner workings of international relations of this time.

Snyder, Louis L. "The Role of Herbert Bismarck in the Angra Pequena Negotiations Between Germany and Britain, 1880-1885." *The Journal of Negro History* 35, no. 4 (1950): 435-52. doi:10.2307/2715526.

This work talks about Bismarck's son and his international endeavors in the wake of his father's work. Snyder's article cites Knaplund's book to help characterize Bismarck's son through the personal descriptions given by Russell.

Shepperson, George. "Africa and America." *Bulletin. British Association for American Studies*, New Series, no. 3 (1961): 25-30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27553519>.

This article talks about the colonial relationship that the United States of America had with Africa and uses Knaplund's collection to give perspective on Germany's stance on the issue. Citation of Russell's letters concerning Bismarck (especially when considering the below Snyder source) show that Russell and Bismarck clearly spoke of international relations that extended beyond Europe and affected the entire world.

"Paul A. Knaplund, 79, Is Dead; Historian Taught at Wisconsin." *The New York Times*. April 11, 1964. Accessed November 15, 2018.

This obituary characterizes Knaplund as a noteworthy historian and one of the first to collect English primary source documents in his research on the British Empire and its relationship with neighboring countries.

Stehlin, Stewart A. "Bismarck and The Secret Use of The Guelph Fund." *The Historian* 33, no. 1

(1970): 21-39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24441072>.

This article explains Bismarck's use of funds seized from the House of Welf, an ancestor to the House of Hanover then ruled by British King George. Evidently, Bismarck's lack of respect for this aristocratic family was assumed to manifest itself in his own personal allocation for the funds, though nothing was ever proven. In citing Russell's opinion of the uncertainty of the situation, Stehlin cites Knaplund and assumes the reliability of Russell as an effective barometer to measure Bismarck's intentions.

Stern, Fritz. "Money, Morals, and the Pillars of Bismarck's Society." *Central European History* 3, no. 1/2 (1970): 49-72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4545560>.

This publication characterizes the morals, and not so much the political outcomes, of Bismarck as a near autocrat who ultimately hurt Germany as it began to adopt progressive values and capitalism going forward. Seeing Knaplund here again shows the confidence that historians have in his source as a reliable method of characterizing Bismarck's intentions.